

this privately owned borrow area is designated Class III (Sweeten 2003). Because of its remote location, this site is not visible to the public.

Of the federally protected species that could be potentially present in the White Mesa Mill borrow area (Table 3–44), the Gunnison sage grouse, a federal candidate species, is of primary concern. The White Mesa Mill borrow area lies within the White Mesa Mill site which itself lies within a Gunnison sage grouse conservation area (Sage Grouse Working Group 2000). However, this species is not known to occur at the White Mesa Mill site (IUC 2003).

The cultural history of the on-site IUC borrow area is included in the more general cultural history of southeastern Utah described in Section 3.1.13.1.

Results of the Class I inventory (Davis et al. 2003) indicate that a Class III survey was conducted at this borrow area in 1980 as part of the larger cultural resource inventory of the White Mesa Mill site. Six cultural sites are documented within the boundaries of the borrow area. Of these, three sites are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. One is a Pueblo II (A.D. 900–1150) permanent habitation site, one is a permanent habitation site of indeterminate age, and one is a General Pueblo (A.D. 750–1300) limited activity site. The White Mesa Mill borrow area is an important plant gathering area for White Mesa Utes and is important to the traditional route from Allen Canyon/Cottonwood Wash area to the White Mesa community. Ongoing interviews with White Mesa elders have identified burial sites in the area. Recent interviews (Fritz 2004, in progress) with tribal members indicate that at least three potential traditional cultural properties associated with the Ute Tribe exist on or near the proposed borrow area. These are “potential” traditional cultural properties because their eligibility for National Register status has yet to be determined; this determination would be made during the Section 106 consultation process. In this area, the likelihood of occurrence of traditional cultural properties and their estimated density are extremely high (on a scale of low-medium-high-extremely high) and are likely associated with the Ute Tribe, Navajo Nation, and Hopi Tribe (Fritz 2004, in progress). Traditional cultural properties on or near the site may include sacred gathering areas, sacred ceremonial sites, sacred healing areas, sacred springs, and burial areas.

Neither background noise nor ground vibration data are available for this borrow area. Noise levels at this borrow area reside within the boundaries of the White Mesa Mill site. Background levels are expected to be comparable to noise levels associated with open desert areas, with some influence from existing White Mesa Mill operations that are centered about 1 mile to the north of the borrow area. These noise levels could approach 50 to 60 dBA at the borrow area as a result of operations at the White Mesa Mill facilities. US-191 passes about 1 mile to the east of the designated borrow area. Background noise levels at the site would be influenced by traffic on US-191. There are no rail lines near the borrow area.

### **3.6 References**

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